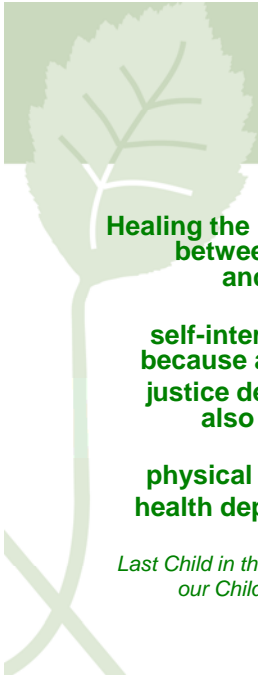




Building a Movement to Reconnect Children & Nature

**Cheryl Charles, Ph.D.  
President and CEO**

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**Healing the broken bond  
between our young  
and nature is in  
everyone's  
self-interest, not only  
because aesthetics or  
justice demand it, but  
also because our  
mental,  
physical and spiritual  
health depend upon it.**

Richard Louv  
*Last Child in the Woods: Saving  
our Children from Nature-  
Deficit Disorder*





## Mission

- The mission of the Children & Nature Network (C&NN) is to build a movement to reconnect children and nature.



## What We Do

- **Communicate**
- **Synthesize**
- **Engage Grassroots Participation**



## Definition of Children and Nature-Centered Experiences

- Nature-centered experiences for children are those that instill wonder and engender curiosity; occur in outdoor settings ranging from backyards to neighborhoods to city parks to wilderness; and occur in the form of guided activities as well as unstructured nature play in children's everyday lives.



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## C&NN Five-Year Goals

- Reverse the societal trend of the past three decades in which children and youth have become disconnected from direct experience in the outdoors in their everyday lives.
- Build widespread, cross-sector community support throughout the US and all major regions of the world.
- Show demonstrable, measurable success.

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## Examples of Measurable Objectives

- Reach more than half the nation's parents in a public awareness campaign.
- Obtain the endorsement of influential physicians and medical associations to prescribe "nature play" for children.
- With allied organizations, reverse the trend of childhood obesity in five years.
- Engage major builders and developers to design and redesign communities that are children and nature-centered.
- Secure the commitment of one-third of the nation's mayors and one-half the nation's governors to support children and nature-centered places and programs.
- Establish children and nature initiatives in 50 states and 50 nations

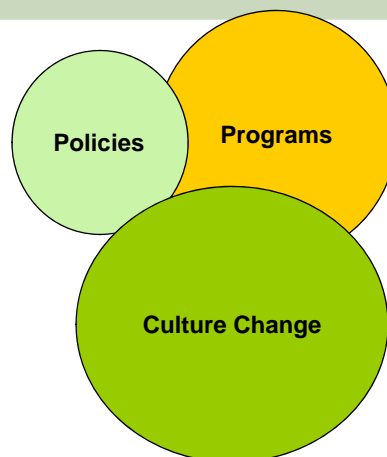
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## Tipping Points

Once a new idea is accepted by a group of "innovators" and "early adopters," together typically representing 5 to 13% of the population, it becomes self-sustaining.

Based on the work of Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*



## What Research Says: The Deficit

- Children are spending 40 to 65 hours a week attached to electronic umbilica.
- Fewer than 1 in 5 children walk or ride a bike to school.
- Childhood obesity has increased from 4% in the 1960s to 20% today.
- Children have less time for unstructured, creative play in the outdoors than ever before in human history.

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## What Research Says: The Benefits

- Children are happier, healthier and smarter when they connect with nature.
  - **Happier:** Nature play increases self esteem, improves psychological health and reduces stress. Children learn self-discipline and are more cooperative.
  - **Healthier:** Nature play improves physical conditioning and reduces obesity.
  - **Smarter:** Nature play stimulates creativity and improves problem solving. Children do better in school.

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## C&NN 2008 Priorities

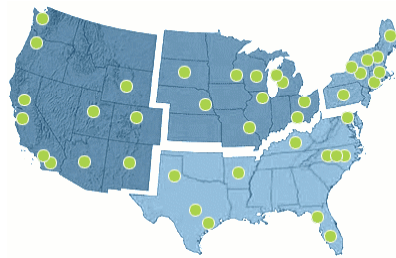
- Growing Public Awareness
- Providing Access to State of the Art Resources
- Disseminating Principles of Children and Nature-Centered Design
- Supporting Community Leadership and the Grassroots
- Engaging Leadership within and among Sectors
- Developing New Generations of Natural Leaders™
- Filling the Gaps by Identifying Trends and Areas for Additional Research

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## Mapping the Movement

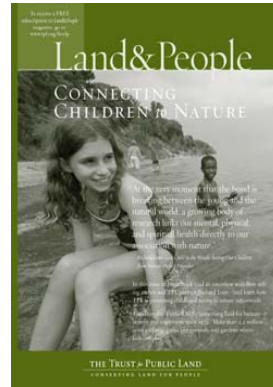
- Since April of 2006, more than 40 communities nationwide and in Canada have launched children and nature initiatives and campaigns



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## In the News



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## In the News, cont.



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## Sample of C&NN Deliverables

- **C&NN Web Site** (launched in 2006)
- **Launch of National Campaign to LNCI** (National Press Club April 2006)
- **National Gathering of Regional Leaders** (August 2007)
- **C&NN Annotated Bibliographies of Research, Volumes 1 and 2** (2007)
- **C&NN Community Action Guide: Building the Children & Nature Movement from the Ground Up** (January 2008)
- **Children and Nature 2008: A Report on the Movement to Reconnect Children to the Natural World** (January, 2008)

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## C&NN Board of Directors

- **Richard Louv**, Chairman, *author and journalist*
- **Cheryl Charles**, Ph.D., President and CEO, *Former Founding National Director of Project Learning Tree and Project WILD*
- **Martin LeBlanc**, Vice President, *National Youth Education Director, Sierra Club*
- **Martha Farrell Erickson**, Ph.D., Secretary, *Co-Chair, University of Minnesota's President's Academic Initiative on Children, Youth and Families*
- **Brother Yusef Burgess**, *outdoor and youth educator*
- **Stephen R. Kellert**, Ph.D., *scholar, author and professor, Yale University; Partner, Environmental Capital Partners*
- **Amy Pertschuk**, Managing Director, *Co-Founder, enature.com*

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**Gerald Charles, M.D.**  
Professor of Medicine Emeritus  
University of California  
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*Sharing Nature with Children*

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**Robert Michael Pyle, Ph.D.**

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**Bill Vanderberg**

Dean of Students  
Crenshaw High School  
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## C&NN Senior Associates

- **Nancy Herron**, Outdoor Learning Programs Coordinator, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- **Clifford Knapp**, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Northern Illinois University, author, scholar, outdoor and experiential educator
- **Kathy Baughman McLeod**, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Chief Financial Officer, State of Florida
- **Bob Peart**, Director, Kesho Trust; Founder, Nature Child Reunion, [www.naturechildreunion.ca](http://www.naturechildreunion.ca)

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## C&NN Grassroots Leadership Team

- **Betsy Townsend**, Chair; Co-Founder and Co-Chair, Leave No Child Inside Greater Cincinnati, [www.lncigc.org](http://www.lncigc.org)
- **Janet Carrier Ady**, Chief, Division of Education Outreach, National Conservation Training Center, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- **Liz Baird**, Director of School Programs, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences
- **Brother Yusef Burgess**, Environmental Educator, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; C&NN Board of Directors
- **Avery Cleary**, Executive Director, Hooked on Nature
- **Paul Hai**, Program Coordinator, Adirondack Ecological Center, State University of New York College of Science and Forestry

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## C&NN Grassroots Leadership Team, cont.

- **Nancy Herron**, Outdoor Learning Programs Coordinator, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; C&NN Senior Associate
- **Brooke Levey**, Extension Educator – 4 H, University of Nebraska Lincoln; Co-Founder “Healthy Families Play Outside” in Nebraska
- **John Thielbahr**, Director, Professional Education, Center for Distance and Professional Education, Washington State University
- **Jeff Williamson**, President, Arizona Zoological Society
- **Marilyn Wyzga**, Wildlife Educator, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Co-Founder, New Hampshire Children in Nature Coalition

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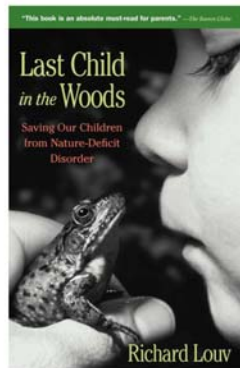
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## A Book that Launched a Movement



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